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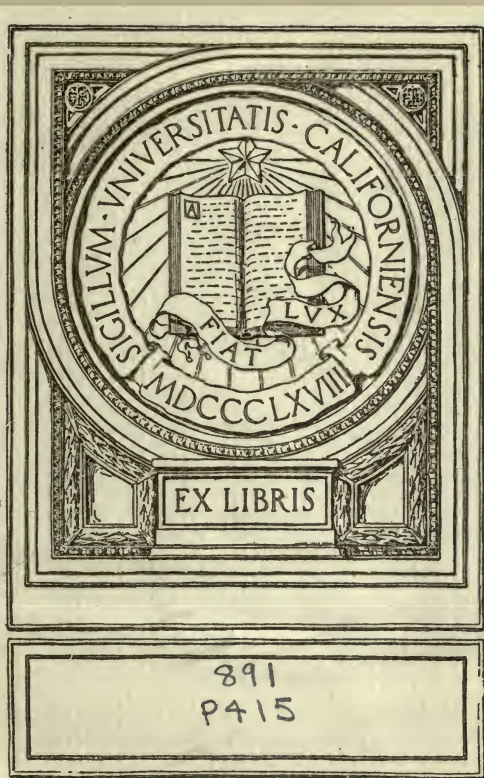


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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

ON

AMENDED ORTHOGRAPHY,

AUTHORIZED BY THE

LEGISLATURE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR BEAVER, OCT. 24, 1887.

REPORT MADE APRIL 8, 1889.

HARRISBURG:

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Pennsylvania Commission on Amended Orthography.

Concurrent Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives.

“*Resolved* (if the Senate concur), That the Governor be and is hereby authorized to appoint a commission consisting of six competent persons who shall examine as to the propriety of adopting an amended orthography of the public documents hereafter to be printed, and how far such amended orthography may with propriety be adopted, and report thereon to the next session of the General Assembly: *Provided*, That such commission shall receive no compensation for its services.”

Passed March 31, 1887.

Approved April 16, 1887, by Governor Beaver.

Commission appointed October 24, 1887.

F. A. MARCH, LL. D. (Princeton, Amherst), L. H. D. (Columbia),
*Professor of English in Lafayette College, Ex-President of
the American Philological Association, Chairman.*

THOMAS CHASE, LL. D. (Harvard), *Ex President of Haverford
College, Member of the American Committee of Revision of
the New Testament.*

REV. H. L. WAYLAND, D. D. (Brown), *Ex-President of Frank-
lin College, editor of the “National Baptist,” 1420 Chestnut
street, Philadelphia.*

HON. JAMES W. WALK, A. M. (Lafayette), M. D. (University of
Pa.), *House of Representatives of Pa., General Secretary of
the Society for Organizing Charity, 1705 Chestnut street,
Philadelphia.*

ARTHUR BIDDLE, Esq., A. B. (Yale), *208 South Fifth street,
Philadelphia.*

SAMUEL A. BOYLE, Esq., *Executive Department, Harrisburg, Pa.,
Secretary.*



REPORT.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania :

The Commission have taken for granted that they were appointed in view of facts like the following :

1. It is currently stated by students of language that English words as commonly spelt contain a large proportion of letters which are superfluous and misleading, and which greatly increase the cost of writing and printing.

2. It is currently stated by leading educators that the irregular spelling of the English language causes a loss of two years of the school time of each child, and is a main cause of the alarming illiteracy of our people; that it involves an expense of many millions of dollars annually for teachers, and that it is an obstacle in many other ways to the progress of education among those speaking the English language, and to the spread of the language among other nations.

3. Leading educators, among whom are many teachers of much practical experience, and associations of learned scholars declare it possible to improve our spelling and have proposed plans of improvement.

4. The amendment of German spelling by the German government which is now going on, attracts the attention of other countries and is leading to improvements in the spelling of other languages of Europe.

The Commission has asked assistance from many competent persons, especially superintendents of education, and from the American Philosophical Society, one of the highest authorities upon such a subject, which kindly appointed a committee of its own learned members to assist in this examination, which committee has made a weighty report, herewith submitted as Appendix A. With such assistance the Commission has proceeded to examine the orthography used in the public documents of the State, and to inquire how much its defects increase the cost of the public printing and how far they are an impediment to the acquisition of the English language and to education, and what amendments in orthography may be easily introduced into the public documents.

First. The cost of printing superfluous and misleading letters. These are such as the final "ugh" in "though," the final "me" of "programme," the final "ue" of "catalogue," the final "e" of "genuine" and "engine," the final "l" in "shall" and "will." It is

found that the removal of silent e's would save four per cent. of all the letters on a common printed page, the removal of one consonant of each pair of duplicated consonants would save 1.6 per cent. In the New Testament printed in phonetic types in 1849 by A. J. Ellis one hundred letters and spaces are represented by eighty-three. As far as printing and paper are concerned, a six dollar book would be thus reduced to five dollars. The matter of six volumes of the public documents would cost for printing as much as five now do.

The report of the Superintendent of Public Printing and Binding for the year ending June 30, 1887, shows an expenditure of \$156,427.53. It would seem that the reduction in this bill would be nearly \$20,000, after making allowance for the lithographic work and binding.

If we trace the saving of money to the people from the use of simple spelling in all printing and writing, it is plainly very great. All books may cost one-sixth less. The Encyclopædia Britannica would make twenty volumes instead of twenty-four, and cost twenty-four dollars less. The newspapers would all save one column in six. One-sixth would be saved in all writing, in the manuscripts of books and periodicals, the records of courts, deeds, wills and other legal documents, the sermons of preachers, the books of merchants and other men of business, and correspondence of all sorts. In the year ending June 30, 1886, in our American post offices there were sold 1,147,906,400 two cent postage stamps, 152,742,250 stamped envelopes; the aggregate of all stamps, stamped envelopes, wrappers and cards was 2,342,364,871. Adding the postage of Great Britain, it is likely that three billions of written communications in English passed through the mails in that year. One-sixth of the labor of writing is well worth saving.

Second. The defects in English orthography constitute an impediment in education. The Honorable J. H. Gladstone has carefully collected the statistics of the English schools, and he finds that the average time allotted to spelling, reading and dictation is 32.2 per cent. of the time devoted to secular instruction. An average English child spending eight years in school spends 2,320 school hours in these exercises. He concludes that 720 hours of spelling lessons might certainly be dispensed with if our spelling were simplified. And, further, upon comparing the schools of England with those of Italy, Germany, and other countries, he is convinced that "if English orthography represented English pronunciation as closely as the Italian does, at least half the time and expense of teaching to read and spell would be saved. This may be taken as 1,200 hours of a lifetime, and and as more than half a million of money [\$2,500,000] per annum for England and Wales alone. * * * In the elementary schools of Italy, though the aggregate time of schooling is shorter, the children learn much about the laws of health, and domestic and social economy. In Germany they acquire considerable knowledge of literature and

science, and in Holland they take up foreign languages. It is lamentable how small a proportion of our scholars ever advance beyond the mere rudiments of learning; a circumstance the more to be regretted as they will have to compete with those foreign workmen whose early education was not weighted with an absurd and antiquated orthography."

The Commission has requested some of the superintendents of schools in this Commonwealth to furnish them the statistics of our schools. They agree substantially with those published by Mr. Gladstone. The views of the Honorable James McAllister, the superintendent of the schools of Philadelphia are contained in Appendix A. A communication is also added from the Hon. W. T. Harris, for many years superintendent of the schools in St. Louis, in which he gives an account of an improved system of printing reading books used in these schools, by which time is gained for the pupils (Appendix B).

Third. Considerations in favor of State action for the regulation of spelling.

The facts heretofore stated show how important spelling is, and how closely connected with the education of the people. A government, then, which has the care of education should care for so vital a point in making education easy.

Paternal governments like that of Germany direct the spelling of school books, and States like California which direct the preparation of school books, may do the same.

The documents printed by the State of Pennsylvania are important in many ways, and their form is worthy of careful attention from the Legislature.

If the State authority were given to any orthography it would have great influence as an example, and school books and other publications would be led to follow it.

The readers of the State documents are for the most part persons of unusual intelligence, who would not be embarrassed by improvements in spelling, and who would approve a reasonable orthography.

Fourth. What improvements have been proposed?

All living languages are changing continually in pronunciation, and the spelling naturally changes with the pronunciation. Such changes were going on in the English language all the time from King Alfred to Dr. Johnson. Since Johnson's time, the early reformers most interesting to Americans are Benjamin Franklin and Noah Webster. Some account of their action may be found in the report of the Committee of the American Philosophical Society in Appendix A.

Since the growth of the modern science of language the most important propositions for improvement have come from the students of language.

A revision of the alphabet is necessary for perfect scientific spelling,

and a revision was made by the American Philological Association in 1877.

In 1883 a scheme of partial reform was jointly approved by the Philological Society, of England, and the American Philological Association and recommended for immediate use. These changes were made in the interest of etymological and historical truth and are confined to words which are not much disguised for general readers. The scheme is printed in Appendix C.

Many propositions have been made for adopting part of these changes, some of which may be found in Appendix C.

Without venturing to recommend any of these, or any orthographic novelties, the Commission would call attention to the fact that many words are spelt in two ways in our dictionaries, and that it is therefore necessary for a choice to be made between the different spellings. We find "honor" and "honour," "traveller" and "traveler," "comptroller" and "controller," and hundreds of such pairs. In these words one way of spelling is better than the other on grounds of reason, simpler, more economical, more truthful to sound etymology and scientific law.

The Commission respectfully submits that the regulation of the orthography of the public documents is of sufficient importance to call for legislative action, and recommends that the public printer be instructed, whenever variant spellings of a word are found in the current dictionaries, to use in the public documents the simpler form which accords with the amended spelling recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and the English Philological Society.

FRANCIS A. MARCH,
THOMAS CHASE,
H. L. WAYLAND,
ARTHUR BIDDLE,
JAS. W. WALK,
SAMUEL A. BOYLE.

APPENDIX A

Report of the Committee Appointed (January 6, 1888) by the American Philosophical Society to Assist the Commission on Amended Orthograpy, Created by Virtue of a Resolution of the Legislature of Pennsylvania.

The literature of the subject of "Spelling Reform" is already extensive, and, for its purposes, sufficiently exhaustive. The most eminent filologists in England and America have contributed to it, and the published testimony in favor of reform is from filologists, linguists, scientists, statesmen, educators, editors and literary workers in general.

In view of this, your committee recognizes that there are practically no new facts to be brought out to strengthen the argument on either side. What it aims to do, then, is to present, in a logical and conclusive manner, the known facts in the case, together with a consensus of opinions drawn from high sources, in so far as they illustrate the points at issue.

In this way, your committee designs to review the whole problem, so that the objective point, the recommendation of the State Commission that certain simplified spellings be employed in the public documents, can be intelligently considered.

1. WHAT IS SPELLING?—According to Worcester, it is the art of "forming words by arranging their proper letters in due order." But this definition is as loose, and therefore unscientific, on the one hand, as it is popularly true and sufficient on the other. The main issue is bound up in the adjective "proper;" a secondary issue is in the word "letters."

To dispose of the latter, it need only be remembered, that "letters" are but the mechanical devices or symbols by which words are represented to the eye. Any one who can analyze a word into its fonetic elements can spell that word by a synthetic recombining those elements. And this, in the truest sense, is spelling; for the spoken language is *the language*, while the written language is merely its mechanical representation to the eye.

It is not therefore, primarily, "arranging their *proper letters*" that constitutes the true spelling of words, but the proper arranging of their component sounds. Just so far, then, as the successive letters of the written word represent—and exclusively represent—those successive component sounds of the spoken words, just so far will they be the "proper letters" and the written spelling a proper spelling. That

is, in true spelling every symbol should have but one sound, and every sound but one symbol.

2. WHAT IS ENGLISH SPELLING?—By the foregoing amplified definition, it is evident that the great bulk of our English spelling can be so called only by courtesy—only by a deference to a usage that has itself originally deferred to the ignorant printers and proof-readers of by-gone centuries. Orthograpy, in its root sense, can hardly be considered an element of Victorian English.

Indeed, as Lord Lytton well says “A more lying, round about, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed system of spelling was never concocted by the father of falsehood. How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict?”

“The greatest genius among grammarians,” says Dr. March, “Jacob Grimm, but a few years ago, congratulated the other Europeans that the English had not made the discovery that a whimsical, antiquated orthograpy stood in the way of the universal acceptance of the language.”

And why is it a “whimsical, antiquated orthograpy?”

Because, being unphonetic, it is unetymological. “It is the *sound* of the spoken word,” says Skeat, “which has to be accounted for, and all symbols which disguise this sound are faulty and worthless. If our old writers had not used a fonetic system, we should have no true data to go by.” “We still retain much,” says the same author, “of the Elizabethan spelling, which, even at that period, was retrospective, with a Victorian pronunciation. * * * The changes in spelling since 1600 are comparatively trifling, and are chiefly due to the printers who aimed at producing a complete uniformity of spelling, which was practically accomplisht shortly before 1700. The changes in pronunciation are great, especially in vowel sounds. * * * The shortest description of modern spelling is to say, that, speaking generally, it represents a Victorian pronunciation of popular words by means of symbols imperfectly adapted to an Elizabethan pronunciation; the symbols themselves being mainly due to the Anglo-French scribes, of the Plantagenet period, whose system was meant to be fonetic. It also aims at suggesting to the eye the original forms of learned words. It is thus governed by two conflicting principles, neither of which, even in its own domain, is consistently carried out.”

And again, says Dr. March, “Caxton brought over a force of Dutch printers, who set up manuscripts as best they could, with many an objurgation. People ceased, at last, to feel any necessity for keeping sounds and signs together. The written words have come to be associated with the spoken words as wholes without reference to the sounds which the separate letters would indicate. Changes in the sounds go on without record in the writing. Ingenious etymologists slip in new

silent letters as records of history drawn from their imagination. Old monsters propagate themselves in the congenial environment, and altogether we have attained the worst spelling on the planet. And we have been proud of it, and we are fond of it."

The actual condition of things, then, as Meiklejohn (late Asst. Commissioner of the Endowed School Commission for Scotland) puts it, is: Out of the 26 letters, only 8 are true, fixt and permanent qualities—that is, are true to both eye and ear. There are 38 distinct sounds (Sayce recognizes 40, others 32) in our spoken language; and there are about 400 distinct symbols (simple and compound) to represent these 38 sounds. In other words, there are 400 servants to do the work of 38. Of the 26 letters, 15 have acquired a habit of hiding themselves. They are written and printed, but the ear has no account of them; such as *w* in *wrong* and *gh* in *right*. The vowel sounds are printed in different ways; a long *o*, for example, has 13 printed symbols to represent it. And Isaac Pitman shows that in our magnificent tongue, with its wretched orthograpy, the long vowel *a* (in *father*) is represented in 5 different ways; the *a* (in *gate*) in 17 ways; the *ē* has 21 different spellings; the *oa* (in *broad*) is represented by 9 different combinations of letters; the vowel *ō* has 19 modes of representation, and the vowel "*oo*" (in *smooth*) has 21.* Mr. Ellis gives a list of 97 signs and combinations to express vowel sounds, and having, in all, 319 meanings, or a little more than an average of three meanings to each sign or combination; and, further, he shows that 34 consonant signs have 79 uses.

As a consequence of all this (and more if we were to stop to discuss it), an enthusiastic fonetist has calculated that the word *scissors* can be correctly spelt in 596,580 different ways, when it ought to be possible to spell it in but *one*, and that one obvious to a child or a foreigner who has never seen it in print nor heard it spelt. In brief, we have, says Prof. Whitney, "a greater discordance between the written and the spoken speech among us than in any other community of equal enlightenment. This is the whole truth; and any attempt to make it appear otherwise savors only of the wisdom of the noted fox who lost his brush in a trap, and wanted to persuade himself and the world that the curtailment was a benefit and a decoration. Every departure from the rule that writing is the handmaid of speech is a dereliction of principle, and an abandonment of advantages which seem to have been long ago assured to us, by the protracted labors of many generations of the most gifted races known to history. * * * That the written word in any case deviates from the spoken is a fault which may, indeed, admit of palliation, even amounting to excuse, but which it is an offense against all true science and sound sense to extol as a merit."

*Authorities differ somewhat in these figures. Dr. Thomas Hill places the number of symbols for long *a* (in *gate*) as high as thirty.

Such being the state to which our written speech has come, the natural question to ask is :

3. IS REFORM DESIRABLE?—Such a question is answered in its own asking. Reform or improvement is always desirable in anything. Whether it is possible or feasible is another question. But let us see, briefly, why an improved or reformed spelling would be desirable, by looking at some of the benefits that would accrue from it.

(a) *It would tend toward a greater uniformity in pronunciation.*—Upon this point Whitney says: “So loose and indefinite is now the tie between writing and utterance, that existing differences of utterance hide themselves under cover of an orthography which fits them all equally, while others spring up unchecked. No small part of the conservative force expends itself upon the visible form alone; whereas, if the visible and audible form were more strictly accordant, it would have its effect upon the latter also.

(b) *It would greatly economize time, space, labor and money.*

“The amount of saving would depend,” says Dr. J. H. Gladstone, “very much upon the system adopted. The mere removal of duplicated consonants would save 1.6 per cent. and of the mute *e*’s an additional 4 per cent. In the New Testament, printed in fonetic type in 1849, by Alexander J. Ellis, 100 letters and spaces are represented by 83. As far as printing and paper are concerned, therefore, a six-shilling book would be reduced to five shillings.” This is a saving of 17 per cent.

But the question of economy is more far-reaching than we might at first suppose. In the president’s address before the American Philological Association, in 1874, he said: “The time lost by it is a large part of the whole school time of the mass of men. Count the hours that each man wastes in learning to read at school, the hours which he wastes through life from the hindrance to easy reading, the hours wasted at school in learning to spell, the hours spent through life in keeping up and perfecting this knowledge of spelling, in consulting dictionaries—a work that never ends—the hours that he spends in writing silent letters. * * * The cost of printing the silent letters of the English language is to be counted by millions of dollars for each generation. And yet literary amateurs fall in love with these squintings and lisping. They try to defend them by pleading their advantage in the study of etymology. But a changeless orthography destroys the material for etymological study, and written records are valuable to the filologist just in proportion as they are accurate records of speech as spoken from year to year.” This brings us to the next point.

(c) *If some etymologies would be obscured, more would be evidenced and clarified, none could be lost.*

What is known as the “etymological argument” against spelling reform has been so often and so fully met by the scholars best quali-

fied to speak that it would seem unnecessary to do more than allude to it here. And yet it is sure to be the first objection raised by the person of education, and even of scholarly habit, who has not made specific study of the subject. It is, indeed, at once the most plausible and the most baseless of all objections. Even if all trace of roots were lost from present forms, there would still be no danger of any such sacrifice of linguistic facts. But if none could be lost, so comparatively few would be obscured, while many false etymologies would be disowned, many true ones restored and made plain. This is an established fact among filologists, as will appear from the following, from Max Müller: "An objection often made to spelling reform is that it would utterly destroy the historical or etymological character of the English language. Suppose it did; what then? Language is not made for scholars and etymologists; and if the whole race of English etymologists were really swept away by the introduction of spelling reform, I hope they would be the first to rejoice in sacrificing themselves in so good a cause. But is it really the case that the historical continuity of the English language would be broken by the adoption of fonetic spelling, and that the profession of the etymologist would be gone forever? I say no, most emphatically, to both propositions. Because the Italians write *filosofo*, are they less aware than the English, who write *philosopher*, that they have before them the Latin *philosophus* and the Greek *filosofos*? If we write *f* in *fancy*, why not in *phantom*? If in *frenzy* and *frantic*, why not in *phrenology*? A language which tolerates *vial* for *phial* need not shiver at '*filosofer*.' What people call the etymological consciousness of the speaker is strictly a matter of oratorical sentiment only. If anybody will tell me at what date etymological spelling is to begin, whether at 1500 A. D., or at 1000 A. D., or at 500 A. D., I am willing to discuss the question. Till then, I beg to say, that etymological spelling would play greater havoc in English than fonetic spelling, even if we are to draw a line not more than five hundred years ago. If we write *puny*, *puisne*, we might as well write *post-natus*. We might spell *coy*, *quietus*; *pert*, *apertus*; *priest*, *presbyter*; *master*, *magister*; *sexton*, *sacristan*, etc." And from Prof. A. H. Sayce: "We are told that to reform our alphabet would destroy the etymologies of our words. Ignorance is the cause of so rash a statement. The science of etymology deals with sounds, not with letters; and no true etymology is possible when we do not know the exact way in which words are pronounced. The whole science of comparative filology is based on the assumption that the ancient Hindus, Greeks, Romans and Goths spelt pretty nearly as they pronounced. English spelling has become a mere series of arbitrary combinations, an embodiment of the wild guesses and etymologies of a pre-scientific age, and the haphazard caprice of ignorant printers. It is good for little else but to disguise our language, to hinder education and to suggest false etymologies." And from Henry Sweet:

"The notion that the present spelling has an etymological value was quite popular twenty-five years ago. But this view is now entirely abandoned by filologists; only a few half-trained dabblers in the science uphold it."

Testimony of this kind is worth more than a logical array of facts to the average mind, because it adds to the cold fact, the fervor of the personal conviction of those whose convictions are themselves the result of the logic of facts. And just here we cannot do better than quote from Skeat's "The Principles of English Etymology."

"The old spelling was, in the main, very strictly etymological, because it was so *unconsciously*.* In striving to be fonetic, our ancestors kept up the history of words, and recorded, more or less exactly, the changes that took place in them from time to time. But in the sixteenth century an entirely new idea was for the first time started, and probably took its rise from the revival of learning, which introduced the study of Greek, and brought classical words, and with them a classical mode of spelling, to the front; a movement which was assisted by the fact that the spelling was all the while becoming less fonetic. This new idea involved the attempt to be *consciously* etymological; *i. e.*, to reduce the spelling of English words, as far as possible to an exact conformity *in outward appearance* with the Latin and Greek words, from which they were borrowed. But it was only possible to do this with a *portion* of the language. It was easy to do this where words were actually borrowed from those languages, as, for example, in the case of such a verb as *to tolerate*, which was now spelt with one *l*, in order to conform it in outward appearance to the Latin *tolerare*. But the words of native English or Scandinavian origin were less tractable; for which reason our writers, wisely enough, let them alone. There remained words of French origin, and these suffered considerably at the hands of the pedants, who were anything but scholars as regarded Old French. For example, the Latin *debita* had become the Old French and Middle English *dette*, by assimilation of the *b* to *t* in the contracted form *deb'ta*, precisely as it became *detta* in Italian. The modern French and the Italian have the forms *dette* and *detta* still. But in the sixteenth century the disease of the so-called 'etymological' spelling had attackt the French language as well as the English, and there was a craze for rendering such etymology *evident to the eye*. Consequently, the Old French *dette* was recast in the form of *debte*, and the Middle English *dette* was respelt *debte* or *debt* in the same way. Hence, we actually find in Cotgrave's French dictionary the entry: '*Debte*, a debt.' Another word similarly treated was the Old French and Middle English *doute*; and, accordingly, Cotgrave gives '*Doubte*, a doubt.' The modern French has gone back

* "Conscious attempts at etymology sometimes produced rather queer results. Thus the M. E. *femele* was turned into *female*, obviously because men fancied it must have some connection with *male*."

to the original Old French spellings *dette* and *doute*; but we, in our ignorance, have retained the *b* in *doubt*, in spite of the fact that we do not dare to sound it. The rackers of our orthograpy, no doubt, trusted, and with some reason, to the popular ignorance of the older and truer spelling, and the event has justified their expectation; for we have continued to insert the *b* in *doubt* and *debt* (properly *dout det*) to the present day, and there is, doubtless, a large majority among us who believe such spellings to be correct. So easy is it for writers to be misled by paying too great a regard to Latin spelling, and so few there are who are likely to take the trouble of ascertaining all the historical facts.

"Most curious of all is the fate of the word *fault*. In Old French and Middle English it is always *faute*; but the sixteenth century turned it into French *faulte*. English *fault*, by the insertion of *l*. For all that, the *l* often remained mute, so that even as late as the time of Pope it was still mute for him, as is shown by his riming it with *ought* ('Elosia to Abelard,' 185; 'Essay on Man,' i, 69), with *thought* ('Essay on Criticism,' 422; 'Moral Essays,' Ep. ii, 73), and with *taught* ('Moral Essays,' Ep. ii, 212). But the persistent presentation of the letter *l* to the eye has prevailed at last, and we now invariably sound it in English, whilst in French it has become *faute* once more. The object, no doubt, was to inform us that the French *faute* is ultimately derived from Latin *fallere*; but this does not seem so far beyond the scope of human intelligence that so much pains need have been taken to record the discovery. Another curious falsification is that of the Middle English *vitailles*, Old French *vitailles*, from Latin *victualia*. The not very difficult discovery of the etymology of this word was hailed with such delight that it was at once transformed into French *victailles* and English *victuals*. (See Cotgrave.) For all that, the Middle English *vitailles* was duly shortened, in the pronunciation, to *vittles*, precisely as Middle English *batailles* was shortened to *battles*; and *vittles* it still remains for all practical purposes. Swift, in his 'Polite Conversation,' has dared to spell it so; and our comic writers are glad to do the same.

"The form of the word *advance* records a ludicrous error in etymology. The older form was *avance*, in which the prefix *a-* is derived from the French *a* which arose from the Latin *ab*. Unfortunately it was supposed to represent the French *a* which arose from the Latin *ad*, and this Latin *ad* was actually introduced into the written form, after which the *d* came to be sounded. If, then, the prefix *ad-* in *ad-vance* can be said to represent anything, it must be taken to represent a Latin prefix *abd-*! It would be an endless task to make a list of all the similar vagaries of the Tudor remodelers of our spelling, who were doubtless proud of their work and convinced that they were displaying great erudition. Yet their method was extremely incomplete, as it was wholly inconsistent with itself. After

reducing the word *tollerate* to *tolerate*, they ought to have altered *follic* to *folie*, as the latter is the French form; but this they never did. They should likewise have altered *matter* to *mater*, since there is only one *t* in the Latin *materia*; but this they never did. *They had got hold of a false principle, and did not attempt to carry it out consistently.* So much the better, or our spelling would have been even worse than it is now, which is saying a great deal.

"I believe that the stupidity of the pedantic method which I have just described is very little understood; and that, on the contrary, most Englishmen, owing to an excessive study of the classics as compared with English (the history of which is neglected to an almost incredible and wholly shameless extent), actually sympathize with the pedants. But the error of their attempt will be apparent to any who will take the pains to think the matter over with a little care. Their object was, irrespectively of the sound, to render the etymology obvious, not to the *ear*, but to the *eye*; and hence the modern system of judging of the spelling of words by the *eye only*. There is now only one rule, a rule which is often carefully but foolishly concealed from learners, viz., to go entirely by the *look* of a word, and to spell it as we have *seen* it spelt in books. If we do this we hug ourselves in the belief that we are spelling 'correctly,' a belief which even good scholars entertain.

"Certainly the pedants put several words right, as they thought; but their knowledge was slight. They let the pure English and Scandinavian words alone; and as we have seen, they mended (as they thought) the spellings of French words, not by comparison with Old French, which might have been justified, but by comparison with Latin and Greek only; and they were frequently misled by the fancy that Latin was derived in its entirety from the Greek. Thus they fancied that the Latin *silva* was derived from the Greek *βίλη*, and accordingly altered its spelling to *sylva*. Hence, even in English, we have to command and immortalize this blunder by writing *sylvan*. They seem to have had a notion that the Latin *stilus* was derived, of all things, from the Greek *στῆλος* (a pillar), which would be extremely inconvenient, we must suppose, as a writing implement; the fact being that *stilus* and *στῆλος* have no etymological connection. This blunder we commemorate by writing *style*.

"We write *science* because of its connection with the Latin *scientia*; and for this reason some writers of the seventeenth century, struck with the beauty to the eye of the silent *c* after *s*, admiringly copied in such words as *scite*, *scitation* and *scent*. The etymology of the two former was, however, so obvious that the habit fell into disuse; but the etymology of *scent* was less obvious, and so we write *scent* still! What, again, can be more absurd than the final *ue* in the word *tongue*, as if it must needs be conformed to the French *langue*? But when once introduced, it of course remained, because none but scholars of

Anglo-Saxon could know its etymology. It is impossible to enumerate all the numerous anomalies which the disastrous attempt to make etymology *visible* has introduced. Yet this is the valueless system which is so much lauded by those who have made no adequate study of the true history of our language."

A long list might be added. For instance, the old *iland* had an *s* inserted because of its supposed derivation from *insula*. Old English *rime* borrowed an *h* from a supposed Greek original, like *rhythm*, and gave us *rhyme*. The *l* has been inserted in *coude*, to make it like *should* and *would* for which there is a reasonable use of the *l*. Milton's *soveran* (Latin *superanus*) was supposed to have to do with *reigning*, and was so transformed to indicate it, by writing *sovereign*.

Says March: "*Accurse*, earlier *acurse*, from Anglo-Saxon *â*-intensive, and *curse*, simulates by its unfonetic double consonant a Latin origin and prefix *ad*; many words are like it: *affair*, French *a fair*, i. e., *ado*; *afford a-forth*; *affright*, from *a-fyrhtan*; *affray*, past participle correctly *afraid*; *annoy*, earlier *anoi*, Old French *anoi*, from Latin *in odio*, and so on through the prefixes; *allegro* is transformed from Latin *alacrum*; *hurricane*, French *ouragan*, Spanish *huracan*, a word from one of the languages of the aborigines of America, doubles its *r* to persuade etymologists that it *hurries* the *canes*. The double consonants, never correct for pronunciation, are a nest of etymological blunders, and the digraf vowels are as bad. Somewhat different from these sheer blunders are those words in which their unfonetic spelling points to some remote derivation, but yet disguises the history of the words. To follow up the double consonants, a very large part of the apparent compounds of Latin prefixes suggest a mistake. The words are not really Latin compounds, but French. Many with *ad-*, for example, were made in French with the French *a*, and in French and and Early English are so spelt. The double consonant is a modern insertion, which falsifies the sound and the history to give the remote school-Latin. Such are *accompany*, Old French *acompaignier*, compounded of *a* and *compaignier*, to which there is no school-Latin word corresponding; Early English *acoint*, Latin *cognitus*, disguised now in the form *acquaint*; *acomplise*; *acomplish*; *address*, earlier *adress*, French *adresser*; *afirm*; *afix*; *afront*; *agriev*; *alegeance*, *alie*, Old French *alier*, *alley*; *apease*, French *a pais*; *apraise*, *a preis*; *arears*; *asuage*; *aturneye*, *attorney*, etc. These examples, taken from the beginning of the alfabet, may well make the stickler for historical spelling look twice at a double consonant whenever he sees it.

"There are many words which have letters in them which contribute nothing towards ancient history, and falsify the present. Words ending in silent *e* after a short syllable are examples. This *e* tells no history, it is prevallyingly an orthografic expedient to denote that the vowel before it is long; it lengthens *fat* into *fate*, *bit* into *bite*, *fin* into *fine*,

not into *note*, and the like. Whenever it follows a short vowel, therefore, it is false as well as wasteful: *genuin* is standard English pronunciation, *genuine*, is a vulgar corruption; *hav* spells the word intended, *have* should rime with *gave*, *slave*, *knave*, *rave*, etc. We ought to write *imbecit*, *medicin*, *treatis*, *favorit*, *hypocrit*, *infinît*, *definît*, *indicativ*, *subjunctiv*, and the like. Several hundred words belong to this class, in great part learned terms from Greek or Latin, and common to many languages. To scholars they look more natural and scholarly, as the Germans and most of the Europeans write them, without the final *e*. This is one of the amendments which gives best promise of general adoption. The Spelling Reform Association publish as one of their rules for immediate use, 'Omit silent *e* after a short vowel,' and five of the eleven new spellings recommended by the Philological Association are examples of it—*definît*, *giv*, *hav*, *infinît*, *liv*. * * * *Feign*, Old English *fein*, *fain*, from Old French *faindre*, has assumed the *g* of Latin *finco*. * * * *Fonetik* is the very Greek $\varphi\omega\eta\tau\iota\zeta\text{-}\acute{o}\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, the natural old form of it in Roman letters; $\varphi\acute{o}\rho$ is *fur*; $\varphi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota$, *furi*; *Fabius*, $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma$, and the like. But when the Greeklings at Rome began to affect a pure Athenian accent, and retained in words newly taken from Greek the old sound for φ , which had been that of *p* followed by *h*, they wrote *ph* in such words to represent their way of sounding it. The fashion past away at Rome. The Italians, like the Spaniards, have returned to *f*."

"The first question is," says Prof. Max Müller, "in what sense can the present spelling of English be called historical? We have only to go back a very short way in order to see the modern upstart character of what is called historical spelling. We now write *pleasure*, *measure*, and *feather*, but not very long ago, in Spenser's time, these words were spelt *plesure*, *mesure*, *fether*. Tyndale wrote *frute*; the *i* in *fruit* is a mere restoration of the French spelling. * * * The *b* [of *debt*] was likewise reintroduced in *doubt*, but the *p* was not restored in *count* (French *compter*, Latin *computare*), where *p* had at least the same right as *b* in *doubt*. Thus, *receipt*, resumes the Latin *p*, but *deceit* does without it. To *deign* keeps the *g*, to *disdain* does without it. * * * If we wisht to write historically, we ought to write *salm* instead of *psalm*, for the initial *p* being lost in pronunciation was dropt in writing at a very early time (A. S. *sealm*), and was reintroduced simply to please some ecclesiastical etymologists; also *newew* (French *neveu*) instead of *nephew*, which is both unetymological and unhistorical. * * * There are, in fact, many spellings which would be at the same time more historical and more fonetic. Why write *little*, when no one pronounces *little*, and when the old spelling was *lytel*? Why *girdle*, when the old spelling was *girdel*? The same rule applies to nearly all words ending in *le*, such as *sickle*, *ladle*, *apple*, etc., where the etymology is completely obscured by the present orthograpy. Why *scent*, but *dissent*, when even Milton still wrote *sent*? * * *

Why *accede, precede, secede*, but *exceed, proceed, succeed*? Why, indeed, except to waste the precious time of children?"

And Dr. James A. H. Murray, the editor of the mammoth new historical Dictionary, says: "Let us recommend the restoration of the historical *t* after breath consonants, which printers during the past century have industriously perverted to *ed*, writing *fetcht, blusht, pickt, drest, winkt*, like Shakespeare, and Herbert, and Milton, and Addison, and as we actually do in *lost, left, felt, meant, burnt, blest, taught. Laughed* for *laught* is not a whit less monstrous than *taughted, soughted*, would be for *taught, sought*; nor is *worked* for *workt* less odious than *wroughted* would be for *wrought*. * * * The termination of the agent *our* should be uniformly leveled to *or* (which is Old French), as already done in so many words, like *author, doctor, senator, orator* (all of which are adoptions from French, *not* from *Latin*)."

(d.) *The present so-called spelling is the chief hindrance to education, and a chief cause of illiteracy, ignorance and degradation.*—In his "Introduction to the Science of Language," Prof. Sayce speaks of the "vicious moral training afforded by a system that makes irrational authority the rule of correctness, and a letter represent every other sound than that which it professes." He further remarks that the "dissociation between sound and symbol to which the child has been accustomed from his earliest years, makes the English and the French notoriously the worst linguists in Europe. The inadequacy of English spelling is exceeded only by that of the Gaelic, and in the comparative condition of the Irish and Scotch Gaels on the one side, and the Welsh Cymry on the other, we may read a lesson of the practical effects of disregarding the warnings of science. Welsh is phonetically spelt, the result being that the Welsh, as a rule, are well educated and industrious, and that their language is maintained in full vigor, so that a Welsh child has his wits sharpened and his mind opened by being able to speak two languages, English and Welsh. In Ireland and Scotland, on the contrary, the old language is fast perishing; and the people can neither read nor write, unless it be in English."

The most complete and convincing exhibit upon the educational question is that which has been made by Dr. J. H. Gladstone, F. R. S., member of the School Board for London, and sometime President of the English Spelling Reform Association. Dr. Gladstone's statements are drawn from a thorough investigation of the National, British and Wesleyan schools as well as board schools, and from village schools, town schools and schools of the metropolis. He says: "From these data it is easy to calculate that an average English child, spending eight years in school, and making the not unusual amount of 400 attendances per annum, will have spent on an average 2,320 hours in spelling, reading and dictation. * * * The spelling of the Italian

language is, as far as I am aware, the most perfect of any in Europe, with the exception, perhaps, of the Spanish. It is, in fact, almost strictly fonetic; that is, each sound is exprest by its own letter, and each letter has but one sound * * * I have gathered information from different parts of Italy, and fortunately the detailed programs of the instruction in elementary schools are publisht. From them it appears that children begin school at six or seven years of age, and that while in the first class, which usually occupies two years, they learn to read with a correct pronunciation, and do exercises in transcription and dictation. On passing to the second class they acquire the art of reading fluently and with intelligence, and dictation lessons cease at the end of the first four months. As the summer vacation lasts for two months, and all festivals, both civil and religious, are holidays, the number of attendances can scarcely be greater than 360. As religious instruction and exercises, arithmetic and writing occupy a large proportion of the five hours *per diem*, ten hours a week may be taken as an outside estimate for learning to read and spell in the first class; while in the second, reading may occupy five hours, and dictation two and a half hours weekly, but the latter only during the first half the school year. This will give 945 hours, instead of 2,320, and indicates that an Italian child of about nine years of age will read and spell at least as correctly as most English children when they leave school at thirteen, tho the Italian child was two years later in beginning his lessons.

“The spelling of the German language is incomparably better than our own, yet many mute letters are employed, and several sounds are capable of being represented in more ways than one. I have obtained information from educational authorities in various parts of Prussia, Saxony, Wirtemberg, Baden and Hamburg, and that with regard to all classes of society. The German child seems usually to begin his schooling everywhere at six years of age; and the general testimony is that he learns in two years, if not in a shorter time, to read distinctly and correctly books which are not above his comprehension.

After giving some details he continues: “It appears, therefore, that the irregularities of German spelling, trifling as they are when compared with ours, greatly prolong the time required; yet a German child of ten is about on a par, as to spelling and reading, with our fifth standard children, and is thus saved about two years’ time, tho he commenced to learn later.

“The Dutch, Danish and Swedish languages are spelt better than our own, tho their orthograpy is by no means perfect. The information which I have received from these countries does not give definit numerical data, but it shows that reading, at least, is acquired more quickly than with us. As to Sweden, I am assured, on the authority of Mr. Ekman, the school board inspector of the Upsala district, that

'the children in the Swedish board schools as a rule are able to read fluently and to write correctly at the age of nine to ten years.'

"When, however, we turn to France we find a language which is spelt much more systematically than our own, but has peculiarities which render its orthograpy almost as difficult. Consequently a very large amount of time has to be expended, as with us, in dictation and transcription. * * * In reply to inquiries as to the comparative time a child ignorant of letters, but understanding English and Italian equally well, would take to learn how to read and write each language correctly, the principal estimated that the English language would require about twice the time of the Italian.

"From inquiries which I have made respecting the Anglo-German schools in London, the general result seems to be that the children acquire as great a proficiency in reading and writing German in eighteen months as they do English in two years. These schools are six in number, and some are in very poor and some in respectable neighborhoods. My own visits, however, to some of these schools convinced me that notwithstanding the great attention paid to the English language, the scholars never become nearly as proficient in spelling it as they do in spelling the German. * * *

"If English orthograpy represented English pronunciation as closely as the Italian does at least half the time and expense of teaching to read and spell would be saved. This may be taken as 1,200 hours in a lifetime, and as more than half a million of money (\$2,500,000) per annum for England and Wales alone."

Various experiments have been made by educators in teaching English spelling by a fonetic alfabet. The result shows that children taught in this way acquire the ordinary spelling much more easily afterward. The latest expression upon this point is from the pen of Dr. Thomas Hill, in *The Forum* for April, 1889. He says, "Experience has demonstrated that there is no means so efficient as the use of simple reading books printed in a truly fonetic manner so that each sound has but one representative and each combination of letters but one sound. The accent must also be markt, and in some cases the emfasis. When the pupil can read fluently fonetic English he requires but a few weeks to learn to read the ordinary spelling.

"Three fundamentally different ways have been proposed of giving to elementary books a fonetic dress. First, by diacritic signs, such as are used in pronouncing dictionaries; secondly, by using an enlarged alfabet; thirdly, by a serious and well considered imitation of those American humorists who apply the twenty-six Roman letters to a fonetically uniform use. The first method is not only expensive and troublesome to print, but trying to the reader's eyes, and not always applicable without respelling. The second is the mode of the Cincinnati alfabet, and is proposed in a new and improved form in Mr. Bell's World-English. The Cincinnati alfabet was tried long enough and

extensively enough to give a practical experimental demonstration of its immense value. We tested it thoroughly for six or seven years in the town of Waltham, Massachusetts, which then had about 800 children in the public schools. The effect on the school life of the town was very marked. The saving of time in teaching the children to read and spell enabled us to introduce exercises for the eye and the hand, thus cultivating habits of observation, skill in drawing and writing, and geometrical ability. The fonetic print corrected the brogue of the Irish children and the Yankee dialect of the American in a surprising manner. An improvement in the moral and intellectual tone of the schools was also noticeable, arising certainly in part from giving the children interesting reading, in place of stupid 'a, b, ab,' 'b, a, ba,' and instead of such absurd falsehood as that of saving 'sea,' 'you,' 'pea,' spells 'cup.'

"Fears were expressed lest this method should injure the pupils' spelling. In order to test that question, I took pains to procure, several times, lists of words which had actually been used in Boston, Roxbury, and other places with the percentage of failures on each list. Springing these lists, without warning, upon classes of the same grade in Waltham, we always found our percentage of errors very much smaller than in other towns, sometimes I think only one-third as large. We also questioned each pupil in our high-school as to the amount of time which he or she had devoted in his or her whole school life to fonotype and fonography. Comparing these times with the percentage of errors in spelling, by the same scholars, we found that those who had read the most fonotype made the fewest mistakes."

One point more. Out of 1,972 failures in the English Civil Service examinations, 1,866 failed in spelling. The Right Honorable Robert Lowe, formerly Minister of Education in England, challenged the House of Commons that not half a dozen members could spell, off-hand, the word "unparalleled." The Earl of Malmesbury, having examined the State papers in the foreign office, says that no Prime Minister from Lord Bute to Lord Palmerston could pass an examination in spelling.

The foregoing exhibits seem to leave little room for doubt as to the *desirability* of reform. There is, however, one other factor in the discussion of such a theme. Let us call it the personal factor. How do such statements affect the opinion or judgment of men as individuals? Who cares or who has ever cared for, or believed in the desirability, to say nothing of the possibility, of an amended orthography?

A few years ago 130 British school boards presented a memorial to the Education Department praying for a Royal Commission in the matter; the British Social Science Association passed resolutions favoring reform; the Philological Society of England and the American Philological Association, the Spelling Reform Association, general and local, have been active in the cause. In 1875, Teachers' Association

of Pennsylvania and New Jersey took favorable action. In July, 1877, the State Teachers' Association of New York appointed a committee to ask the Legislature of that State to create a commission to inquire into the reform, and report how far it may be desirable to adopt amended spelling in the public documents and direct its use in the public schools. The Ohio State Teachers' Association also took action in favor of the reform. In 1878, a memorial was prepared to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States. This was signed by the president and ex-presidents of the Philological Association, and by filologists and professors in about fifty of our leading universities and colleges. The Department of Public Instruction of the city of Chicago took up the matter and its Board of Education unanimously adapted a resolution: "That the secretary of this board correspond with the principal school boards and educational associations of the country, with a view to coöperation in the reform of English spelling." Other State teachers' associations and local societies have been similarly emphatic in their expression. Indeed, any list headed by such names as Müller, Sayce, Skeat, Earle, Murray, Morris, Sweet, Whitney, March, Child, Trumbull, Haldeman, Lounsbury; and by statesmen, scientists, poets, educators, such as Gladstone, Sumner, Mill, Lytton, Tennyson, Trevelyan, Thirlwall, Bain, Darwin, Lubock, Harris, Barnard, constitutes "an authority" in English, quite as respectable as the The Academy, in French. There is no lack of learned support; all real *authority* is for the reform. It is the right thing to do, but—

4. IS REFORM FEASIBLE?—First, we must remember that *The written language is not the language*, but merely a device for recording the language, quite within the scope of the reformers as well as the first framers.

Secondly, let us see *What has been done in other languages*. To quote again from the valuable report of Dr. Gladstone:

"In the Italian and Spanish languages the spelling has already been brought into almost perfect conformity with the pronunciation. In these, therefore, there is nothing to justify any agitation for further reform.

"Although little fault can be found with the German spelling as compared with the English and French, the educationists of that country and the governments of the different States have long been desirous of simplifying it. In 1854, meetings were held both at Hanover and Leipzig, which resulted in certain modifications of the spelling being rendered obligatory in the Hanoverian higher schools. This was followed in 1860 by Wirtemberg, which adopted a reformed orthograpy for its elementary as well as its upper schools; and by Austria in 1861, and by Bavaria in 1886. But the changes adopted by these several States are not the same; and so imminent did the danger appear of having a different mode of writing and printing in dif-

ferent parts of Germany, that a conference of delegates from the several governments was held at Dresden in October, 1872. This led to the Prussian Minister of Education, Dr. Falk, proposing that a competent scholar, Prof. von Raumer, should draw up a scheme; and this met with the approval of all the governments. The scheme thus prepared was privately printed and sent to the respective governments, and then submitted to a ministerial commission, consisting of Von Raumer and eleven other educationists, together with a printer and a publisher. The commission met in January, 1876, and approved of the scheme with certain modifications; and a report of the whole proceedings has been drawn up and printed." The reformed spelling is now required to be taught in all the schools, and the military cadets are required to use it in their official correspondence.

"Up to the beginning of the present century, the spelling of the Dutch language was very unsettled. In 1804, the movement for reform assumed a definite shape through the essay of Prof. von Siegenbeck; and the greatly improved spelling that bears his name was the only official and authorized one till 1873. Then some important changes were proposed by De Vries and Te Winkel, and these are now adopted by the different departments of government. I believe however, that there are other systems which receive official sanction and we can only hope that the result will be 'the survival of the fittest.'

"Similar movements for reform are taking place in the Scandinavian kingdoms. The Swedish spelling appears to be about equal in quality to the German, but for the last 100 years, or thereabouts, attempts have been made by competent persons to establish a purely fonetic system, and the Swedish Academy has adopted some of their proposals and embodied them in a model spelling book; but the government has taken no part in the matter, and there is consequently much diversity in practice. In Denmark, the movement originated with Prof. Rask and some other learned men and schoolmasters, and it has resulted in a government decree, confirming certain regulations with respect to double consonants, the silent *e* and *d*, the abolition of *g*, and some other points. These 'official' changes are not obligatory; but they are winning their way both in private and public schools. In July, 1869, a meeting of scholars from Sweden, Norway and Denmark took place in Stockholm, with the object of establishing a fonetic mode of spelling which should be common to the Scandinavian languages."

And there have been and are other similar movements, among the Slavic nations as well as the Romance-speaking peoples, including the French and the Portuguese.

Thirdly, *What has been done already in our own language?* Has any one dared to lay hands on our fetich and lop off a superfluity or restore a lost feature?

The Anglo-Saxon spelling was fairly fonetic, the chief defects being the double use of *f*, the double use of *s* and the ambiguous use of two characters for the two sounds of *th*. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries "the English language was practically respelt according to the Anglo-French method, by scribes who were familiar with Anglo-French;" thus, *qu* was substituted for *cw*, *c* for *s* (before *e* and *i*).

It was at this period that Orm, a canon of the order of St. Augustine, wrote "The Ormulum" (1215), which was a set of religious services in meter, spelt according to his own scheme. One peculiarity of Orm's method was the doubling of the consonant after the short vowel. Orm, or Orminn, may be called our first spelling reformer, and we have to thank him for preserving to us the pronunciation of his day. In 1554, John Hart, of Chester, England, wrote on "The Opening of the unreasonable writing of our inglish tounge: wherein is shewed what necessarili is to be left, and what followed for the perfect writing thereof." This the author followed up by a publisht work in 1569, called "An Orthographie, conteyning the due order and reason, howe to write or painte thimage of mannes voice. most like to the life or nature." The object of this "is to use as many letters in our writing as we doe voyces or breathes in our speaking, and no more; and never to abuse one for another, and to write as we speake." In 1568, Sir Thomas Smith, Secretary of State in 1548, and successor of Burleigh, suggested an alfabet of 34 characters. This was followed, in 1580, by William Bullokar's book in black-letter, proposing an alfabet of 37 characters. Then, too, we must mention Sir John Cheke, Chaucer and Milton. In 1619, Dr. Gill, head-master of St. Paul's school, publisht his "Logonomia Anglica," advocating an alfabet of 40 letters. In 1633, the Rev. Charles Butler printed an English grammar fonetically. In 1668, Bishop Wilkins publisht his great work, the "Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language," in which he gave the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in a fonetic alfabet of 37 letters. In 1711, says Sayce, "the question of reforming English spelling was once more raised, this time, however, in a practical direction. Dean Swift appealed to the Prime Minister to appoint a commission for the ascertaining, correcting and improving of the English tongue. His appeal, however, was without effect; and the next to apply himself to the subject was Benjamin Franklin, who, in 1768, put forth "A Scheme for a New Alphabet and Reformed Mode of Spelling, with Remarks and Examples concerning the same, and an Enquiry into its Uses."

It would seem that in this hall, if anywhere, a reform advocated by Franklin is entitled, even at this late day, to a fair hearing and an intelligent understanding. Franklin's scheme, tho in some respects crude, has nevertheless the true ring, and is in many details accurate and scientific. It embraces eight vowels and eighteen consonants. There are special signs for *a* in *ball*, *u* in *gum*, *sh*, *th*, *dh*, *ng*. He

considers that the alfabet should be arranged in a more natural manner, beginning with the simple sounds formed by the breath and with no help, or very little, of tongue, teeth, and lips, but produced chiefly in the wind pipe. He omits as unnecessary *c, q, x, u, y* and *j*; this latter he replaces by a special character which is to follow and modify other consonants; preceded by *d* it produces *j* in *James*; by *t*, *ch* in *chevy*; by *z*, the French *j* in *jamais*. *q* has only its hard sound. There are no superfluous letters, no silent letters. The long vowel is expressed by doubling the short one. There are no diacritical marks. In general principles the scheme is sound. Had Franklin lived in the filological light of the present decade, he would have been a power in the good movement. He went, indeed, so far as to begin the compilation of a dictionary and the casting of the necessary new types. The latter were offered to Webster and declined by him on the ground of the inexpediency of employing new characters. This was in 1768. Eight years later he wrote to a lady: "You need not be concerned in writing to me about your bad spelling; for in my opinion, as our alfabet now stands, the bad spelling, or what is called so, is generally the best, as conforming to the sounds of the letters and of the words."

The next great American reformer was Webster. It would be out of place here to discuss Websterianisms. Suffice it to say that Webster had a lasting influence upon our spelling. Had he been more of a scholar his influence would have been vastly greater than it was. The trouble was that he tried to occupy both ends of the see-saw at once. On one end he sat as etymologist, on the other as analogist. He had "just enough of that half-learning," says Lounsbury, "which enables a man, when he arrives at correct conclusions, to give wrong reasons for them. Speaking of Webster's orthografic changes, the same writer well says: "At best they merely touch the surface, and then only in a few places. But one effect they have produced. They have in some measure prevented us, and do still prevent us, from falling into the dead level of an unreasoning uniformity. By bringing before us two methods of spelling, they keep open the question of the legitimacy of each, and expose to every unprejudiced investigator the utter shallowness of the argument that opposes change. Slight as these alterations were, however, they met with the bitterest hostility on their introduction."

After Webster come Mitford, Archdeacon Hare, Landor, Pitman, Ellis and Thomas, and then the mighty host who are leading the present Spelling Reform movement, which includes nearly every eminent English and American scholar. Indeed every one who consciously prefers to spell *parlor, color, music, public, develop, deposit, traveler, jeweler, wagon, woollen, quartet, controller, ake, ax, fantom, program*, proves that spelling reform is popular, and that the people prefer

sense to nonsense, brevity to length, economy to waste, truth to falsehood.

The many devices introduced into the written speech during the past six centuries, demonstrate that there is no cast-iron law of language to prevent other devices from being introduced and accepted again.

Because the French scribes of the twelfth century understood that *c* before *e* and *i*, was soft, they substituted *k* for it when the sound was hard. About 1280 the rune "wen" was replaced by *uu*, and afterward by *w*. Accentual marks suddenly disappeared in the thirteenth century. Toward the fourteenth the rune "thorn" was giving way to the use of *th* and *hw* to *wh*—the latter, doubtless, due to the decay of the guttural *h* leaving the sound of *w* more prominent. Indeed, down to the middle of the fourteenth century, *h* had the force of German *ch*. As that decayed in sound, it was reinforced to the eye by a *c* as in *licht*, *necht*, or by a *g* as in *though*. The symbol *oa* disappeared in the fourteenth, but was revived in the sixteenth century. Another expedient of the fourteenth was to double the final *s* to show that it was not sonant—M. E. *glas*, *blis*, *dros*, became *glass*, *bliss*, *dross*. Another device for the same purpose was to substitute *ce* as in *mice*, *twice*, originally *mys*, *twyës*. Since Shakespeare, useless doubled consonants have given place to a single consonant in words like *pitty*, *linnen*, *marriner*, *widdow*, *pallace*. *Waggon* is now in transition to *wagon*. Duplicate final consonants with final *e* have given place to the single consonant, as *shippe*, *sonne*, *farre*. Useless final *e* has been dropt, as in *cheere*, *drinke*, *looke*, etc. Three new letters, *j*, *w*, *v*, have been introduced.

"About 1630, in opposition to the usage of all past ages," says Dr. Murray, "*u* was made a vowel and *v* a consonant, so that 'Reuiue vs, saue vs from euil,' became 'Revive us, save us from evil.' Up to that time *u* final was a vowel, but *u* before a vowel was a consonant; when the consonant was written *v* the following *e* was no longer needed to distinguish it. Had the reform gone a little farther and dropt the *e* after the consonant *v* we should have been spared many useless appendages to words like *have*, *live*, etc.

In the fourteenth century the system of doubling the vowels was resorted to, to indicate length. Since then *ck* has been substitute for *cc* or *kk*, and within memory the *k* has been dropt in words like *music*, *public*, etc.

Toward the end of the sixteenth century *i* was largely substituted for *y*, so common in Caxton. "In fact," says Skeat, "English abounds with such fonetic devices; no one objects to them so long as they are allowed to remain sporadic, irregular, and inconsistent."

Says Dr. Murray, "The whole history of written languages is the record of such gradual and partial reformation. We know, for instance, what was done about 1500 by the systematic application of *ea*

and *ee* to distinguish two sounds formerly both exprest by long *e*, and the analogous adoption of *oa* and *oo* for the two sounds of long *o*. And the slightest glance at the orthograpy of Shakespeare, Bunyan, or a Bible of the seventeenth century, will show even the most ignorant, what an immense amount of spelling reform has been done since then. Thus, to take at random a single instance, Psalms 106 (forty-eight verses), as printed in 1611, differs in 116 spellings from that printed in 1879, and the first chapter of Genesis, as now printed, differs in 135 spellings from the same version as printed in 1611. One hundred and thirty-five differences in thirty-one verses! tho the same version word for word. Yet there are people— some certainly fools only, but some I fear knaves—who, when spelling reform is mentioned, shriek, ‘You are going to alter our language!’ * * * the fools not knowing, and the knaves pretending not to know, that the spelling in which they read these works [Milton, Shakespeare and the Bible] is already a greatly reformed spelling.”

Finally, “In 1833,” says the report of the State Commission, “a scheme of partial reform was jointly approved by the Philological Society of England and the American Philological Association, and recommended for immediate use. Those changes were made in the interest of etymological and historical truth, and are confined to words which are not much disguised for general readers. * * * Many propositions have been made for adopting part of these changes.” * * *

Among these is the progressive scheme used by “The Spelling Reform Leag,” as follows :

1. Use the simplified forms allowed by standard dictionaries, as *program*, *favor*, etc.
2. Use the two words : **tho**, **thru**.
3. Use the ten words : **tho**, **thru**, **wisht**, **catalog**, **definit**, **hav**, **giv**, **liv**, **gard**, **ar**.
4. Use the two rules : 1. Use *f* for *ph* sounded as *f*, as in *alfabet*, *fantom*, *filosofy*, etc. 2. Use *t* for *d* or *ed* final sounded as *t*, as in *fixt*, *tipt*, *stopt*, *clast*, *crost*, *distrest*, etc.
5. Use the five rules: 1 and 2 as in 4. 3. Drop *a* from digraf *ea* sounded as short *e*, as in *hed*, *helth*, *sted*, etc. 4. Drop silent *e* final in a short syllable, as in *hav*, *giv*, *liv*, *forbad*, *reptil*, *hostil*, *engin*, *infinnit*, *opposit*, *activ*, etc. 5. When a word ends with a double letter, omit the last, as in *eb*, *ad*, *staf*, *stif*, *stuf*, *eg*, *shal*, *wil*, *tel*, *wel*, *dul*, *lul*, etc.
6. Use the Twenty-four Joint Rules of the American and English Philological Associations.
7. Use all changes recommended by the Philological Associations.

At a meeting of the Philological Society, April 20, 1883, it was voted unanimously to omit certain of the corrections formerly recommended, so as to bring about an agreement between the two societies. The

following scheme of partial reform is now jointly approved by the Philological Society, of England, and the American Philological Association, and is recommended for immediate use :

1. e.—Drop silent *e* when fonetically useless, as in *live, vineyard, believe, bronze, single, engine, granite, eaten, rained*, etc.
2. ea.—Drop *a* from *ea* having the sound of *e*, as in *feather, leather, jealous*, etc.
Drop *e* from *ea* having the sound of *a*, as in *heart, hearken*, etc.
3. eau.—For *beauty* use the old *beuty*.
4. eo.—Drop *o* from *eo* having the sound of *e*, as in *jeopardy, leopard*.
For *yeoman* write *yoman*.
5. i.—Drop *i* of *parliament*.
6. o.—For *o* having the sound of *u* in *but*, write *u* in *above* (*abuv*), *dozen, some* (*sum*), *tongue* (*tung*) and the like.
For *women* restore *wimen*.
7. ou.—Drop *o* from *ou* having the sound of *u*, as in *journal, nourish, trouble, rough* (*ruf*), *tough* (*tuf*), and the like.
8. u.—Drop silent *u* after *g* before *a*, and in native English words, as *guarantee, guard, guess, guest, guild, guilt*, etc.
9. ue.—Drop final *ue* in *apologue, catalogue*, etc.; *demagogue, pedagogue*, etc.; *league, colleague, harangue, tongue* (*tung*), etc.
10. y.—Spell *rhyme* *rime*.
11. Double consonants may be simplified :
Final *b, d, g, n, r, t, f, l, z*, as in *ebb, add, egg, inn, purr, butt, bailiff, dull, buzz*, etc. (not *all, hall*).
Medial before another consonant, as *battle, ripple, written* (*writn*), etc.
Initial unaccented prefixes, and other unaccented syllables, as in *abbreviate, accused, affair*, etc., *curvetting, traveller*, etc.
12. b.—Drop silent *b* in *bomb, crumb, debt, doubt, dumb, lamb, limb, numb, plumb, subtle, succumb, thumb*.
13. c.—Change *c* back to *s* in *cinder, expence, fierce, hence, once, pence, scarce, since, source, thence, tierce, whence*.
14. ch.—Drop the *h* of *ch* in *chamomile, choler, cholera, melancholy, school, stomach*.
Change to *k* in *ache* (*ake*), *anchor* (*anker*).
15. d.—Change *d* and *ed* final to *t* when so pronounced, as in *crossed, (crost), looked* (*lookt*), etc., unless the *e* affects the proceeding sound, as in *chafed, chanced*.
16. g.—Drop *g* in *feign, foreign, sovereign*.
17. gh.—Drop *h* in *aghast, burgh, ghost*.
Drop *gh* in *haughty, though* (*tho*), *through* (*thru*).

Change *gh* to *f* where it has that sound, as in *cough*, *enough*, *laughter*, *tough*, etc.

18. l.—Drop *l* in *could*.

19. p.—Drop *p* in *receipt*.

20. s.—Drop *s* in *aisle*, *demesne*, *island*.

Change *s* to *z* in distinctive words, as in *abuse* verb, *house* verb, *rise* verb, etc.

21. sc.—Drop *c* in *scent*, *scythe* (*sithe*).

22. tch.—Drop *t*, as in *catch*, *pitch*, *witch*, etc.

23. w.—Drop *w* in *whole*.

24. ph.—Write *f* for *ph*, as in *philosophy*, *sphere*, etc.

“These recommendations are known as the ‘Joint Rules for Amended Spelling,’ or as the ‘Twenty-four Rules.’ They cover the main points as to which there is substantially no further question between the two societies or among reformers in sympathy with them. * * *

“The rules thus derived necessarily differ in importance and in the extent of their application. Some are very comprehensive, some affect only limited classes of words, and some are mere lists of words to be amended. They are arranged in the alphabetical order of the letters omitted or changed. The rules proper may be reduced to 10.

It should be noted that the rules do not apply to proper names, or to titles or official designations like ‘Philological Association,’ or ‘Phonetic Journal,’ while they may, nevertheless, apply to the individual words which enter into such designations, as *filological*, *fonetic*, *journal*.

“There are sufficient reasons against meddling with proper names and titles. They may well be left to adjust themselves to a fonetic standard when such a standard is established for common words.

“The rules for amended spelling form a sequence, in which each degree includes all preceding degrees. The Five Rules include the Eleven Words, and are themselves included in the Twenty-four Rules. The sequence is more gradually developed in the seven steps of the Leag pledge, according to which one may start, or stop, at any point, from a simple preference for the simplified forms already admitted by the standard dictionaries, to the adoption of all changes recommended by the Philological Associations. The several stages are all consistent with each other, and enable any one who has the spirit of progress in him to exhibit that spirit in practical action, not only free from the risks of individual preferences or caprice, but with the knowledge that he is acting on the advice and in accordance with the practice of scholars of the highest eminence in English filology.”

The report of the State Commission continues: “Without venturing to recommend any of these, or any orthographic novelties, the commission would call attention to the fact that many words are spelt in two ways in our dictionaries, and that it is therefore necessary for a

choice to be made between the different spellings. We find 'honor' and 'honour,' 'traveller' and 'traveler,' 'comptroller' and 'controller,' and hundreds of such pairs. In these words one way of spelling is better than the other on grounds of reason, simpler, more economical, more truthful to sound etymology and scientific law.

"The commission respectfully submits that the regulation of the orthography of the public documents is of sufficient importance to call for legislative action, and that the public printer be instructed, whenever variant spellings of a word are found in the current dictionaries, to use in the public documents the simpler form which accords with the amended spelling recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and English Philological Society.

It is this recommendation of the State Commission that is the objective point of our discussion. Your committee is unable to see how there can be any difference of opinion upon the following points of the argument:

1. That the English language is grossly misspelt, and is therefore an obstruction to the etymologist; a needless consumer of time, money and energy; a falsifier of history; a perverter of the logical and of the moral faculty; a hindrance to education; a chief cause of illiteracy and a clog upon the wheels of general progress.

2. That either a complete or a partial reform is desirable.

3. That as partial reforms have been successfully wrought in the past and present centuries in English, and complete reforms in other languages, it is feasible to hasten and direct the still further improvement of our so-called orthography.

Your committee heartily believes, with Prof. W. D. Whitney, that "it is altogether natural and praiseworthy that we should be strongly attacht to a time-honored institution, in the possession of which we have grown up, and which we have learned to look upon as a part of the subsisting fabric of our speech; it is natural that we should love even its abuses, and should feel the present inconvenience to ourselves of abandoning it much more keenly than any prospective advantage which may result to us or our successors from such action; that we should therefore look with jealousy upon any one who attempts to change it, questioning narrowly his right to set himself up as its reformer, and the merits of the reform he proposes. But this natural and laudable feeling becomes a mere blind prejudice, and justly open to ridicule, when it puts on airs, proclaims itself the defender of a great principle, regards inherited modes of spelling as sacred, and frowns upon the fonetist as one who would fain mar the essential beauty and value of the language."

But your committee is also of the opinion that a complete or strictly fonetic reform, however valuable it be as an ideal, is as yet impracticable. A limited reform in the right direction, however, is not only practicable, but it has already found a foothold. Just how far this

could safely be attempted in the State documents the committee is not required to say. But it is certain that the recommendation of the commission is as safely conservative as any recommendation in the direction of true progress could be, and that its adoption would be a wise and easy step toward uniformity and the simplification of English orthography.

Your committee therefore offers the following :

Resolved, That the regulation of the orthography of the public documents of this State is of sufficient importance to call for legislative action ; and that this society approves the recommendation of the State Commission that the public printer be instructed, whenever variant spellings of a word are found in the current dictionaries, to use in the public documents the simpler form which accords with the amended spelling recommended by the joint action of the American Philological Association and the English Philological Society.

In view of the fact that the Legislature will probably not take final action upon the recommendation of the State Commission at the present session, and as the commission still desires the assistance of this society, we would respectfully suggest that your committee be continued with permission to report whenever it may seem desirable.

PATTERSON DuBois,
HENRY PHILLIPPS, JR.,
JAMES MACALISTER.

APPENDIX "B."

Leigh's System in St. Louis.

By Hon. W. T. HARRIS, *Superintendent in St. Louis, 1868-'81.*

The irregularities in English orthography are, as is well known, the cause of a wide departure on the part of our elementary education from what exists in other countries where English is not spoken. In Germany or Italy the child can correctly spell any word he hears, or pronounce any word he sees, after he becomes familiar with the powers of the letters of his alphabet. Hence the foreigner spends a very small portion of his time in learning to spell his own language, while if he would learn to spell our English language correctly, he must give years of study to it. And what is worst of all, this study is only an exercise of the memory and not a cultivation of the reason or of the power to think. There are a few general principles or suggestive analogies to lighten the burden. The American child must spend a large portion of his school days learning, one by one, the peculiar combinations of the written words of his language.

It is found to be a great saving of time to learn to read by a phonetic alphabet first, and then change to the ordinary alphabet by degrees. The modified alphabet invented by Dr. Edwin Leigh has now been in use with us many years and still gives as great satisfaction as in the first years of its adoption. It is desirable that the child which is just beginning his education should have something consistent and logical, methodical and philosophical, to employ his mind upon, rather than something without either analogy or system; for these first impressions have sometimes the power to change and fix the whole bent of the mind. Dr. Leigh's method of teaching reading by a modified alphabet was introduced into the schools of St. Louis in 1866. By this system the child has an alphabet in which each character represents one sound uniformly. Its only defect is that it has more than one character for the same sound. This would be a defect in a perfect alphabet; but it is an alphabet designated merely as an introduction and preparatory step for the ordinary spelling; it is a great advantage. With this modified alphabet of Dr. Leigh we find the following advantages.

1. Gain of time—a saving of one year out of the two years usually occupied in learning to call off easy words at sight.

2. Distinct articulation, the removal of foreign accent and of local and peculiar pronunciations.

3. The development of logical power of mind in the pupil. He can safely be taught to analyze a word into its sounds and find the letters representing them, whereas with the ordinary orthography it is an insult to his reason to assure him that a sound is represented by any particular letter. Hence analytical power is trained by the phonetic method, instead of mere memory, from the day of his entrance into school—and analytic power is the basis of all thinking activity.

The logical inconsistency of the ordinary alphabet makes the old system a very injurious discipline for the young mind. The earliest studies should be the most logical and consistent. One does not realize how absurd our alphabet is until he finds that of the six vowels, A has 8 uses, E 8, I 7, O 12, U 9, Y 3, so that the single vowels have collectively 47 uses, giving an average of $7\frac{5}{6}$ apiece. Among the consonants, B has two uses (counting the silent ones), C 6, D 4, F 3, G 4, H 3, J 5, K 2, L 3, M 3, N 3, P 2, Q 3, R 2, S 5, T 5, V 2, W 2, X 5, Y 2, Z 4; *i. e.*, 21 consonants have 70 uses, averaging $3\frac{1}{3}$ apiece. It is easy to show how many different pronunciations a word may have by permutation. But while there is much difficulty in determining the proper pronunciation from the spelling it is still more difficult to ascertain the proper letters for the spoken word from analogy. The sound of E in *mete* has no less than 40 equivalents in the language, A in *mate* has 34, A in *father* 2, A in *fall* 21, E in *met* 36, etc. Thus it happens that the word *scissors* may be spelled 58,365,440 different ways and still have analogies justifying each combination. The word *scissors* being composed of six elementary sounds, the first one (S) is represented in 17 different ways, the second 36, the third 17, the fourth 33, the fifth 10, the sixth 17; it results that there are $17 \times 36 \times 17 \times 33 \times 10 \times 17$ different modes of spelling *scissors*. (See A. J. Ellis' "Plea for Phonetics.")

The fact that one is never quite sure of the pronunciation of a new printed word he has never heard pronounced, and never quite sure of the spelling of a word he has only heard pronounced, and not seen in print, is sufficient to prove the illogical and capricious character of our orthography. In place of this complexity and inconsistency, the phonetic system substitutes simplicity and consistency. The child seizes elements from the start. Analysis and synthesis—the complementary processes of the thinking activity—are reached at the beginning; and what the child learns the first year is now found to place him more than a year in advance of his former status, for the reason that his quickened intelligence has been disciplined to seize subjects in a correct manner. With these considerations the fact will not seem strange that pupils who are taught to read phonetically make better arithmetic and grammar scholars and are more wide awake and

attentive, have finer discriminations—in short, are more distinguished in those traits of mind that flow from analytic training.

These views have been presented in my reports as superintendent of the schools of St. Louis. (See especially the reports for 1870-71, pp. 225, 227, and 1876-77, pp. 182-185.) We claimed that we saved a year in learning to read, and as the same system is still in use in St. Louis after twenty years, and the claim is still made for it, I consider the question settled.

W. T. HARRIS.

CONCORD, MASS., *January 26, 1889.*

APPENDIX C.

Joint Rules for Amended Spelling, Approved in 1883 by the Philological Society of London and the American Philological Association.

1. e. Drop silent e when fonetically useless, as in live, vineyard, believe, bronze, single, engine, granite, eaten, rained, etc.
2. ea. Drop a from ea having the sound of e, as in feather, leather, jealous, etc.
Drop e from ea having the sound of a, as in heart, hearken, etc.
3. eau For beauty use the old beuty.
4. eo. Drop o from eo having the sound of e, as in jeopardy, leopard.
For yeoman write yoman.
5. i. Drop i of parliament.
6. o. For o having the sound of u in but write u in above (abuv), duzen, some (sum), tongue (tung), and the like.
For women restore wimen.
7. ou. Drop o from ou having the sound of u, as in journal, nourish, trouble, rough (ruf), tough (tuf), and the like.
8. u. Drop silent u after g before a, and in nativ English words, as guarantee, guard, guess, guest, guild, guilt, etc.
9. ue. Drop final ue in apologue, catalogue, etc.; demagogue, pedagogue, etc.; league, colleague, harangue, tongue (tung), etc.
10. y. Spell rhyme rime.
11. Double consonants may be simplified; final b, g, n, t, f, l, z, as in ebb, add, egg, inn, purr, butt, bailiff, dull, buzz, etc., (not all, hall).
Medial before another consonant, as battle, ripple, written (writn), etc.
Initial unaccented prefixes, and other unaccented syllables, as in abbreviate, accuse, affair, etc., survetting, traveller, etc.
12. b. Drop silent b in bomb, crumb, debt, doubt, dumb, numb, plumb, subtle, succumb, thumb.
13. c. Change c back to s in cinder, expence, fierce, hence, once, pence, scarce, since, source, thence, tierce, whence.
14. ch. Drop the h of ch in chamomile, choler, cholera, melancholy, school, stomach.
Change to k in ache (ake), anchor (anker).

15. d. Change d and ed final to t when so pronounced, as in crossed, (crost), looked (lookt), etc., unless the e affects the preceding sound, as in chased, chanced.
16. g. Drop g in feign, foreign, sovereign.
17. gh. Drop h in aghast, burgh, ghost.
Drop gh in haughty, though (tho), through (thru).
Change gh to f where it has that sound, as in cough, enough, laughter, tough, etc.
18. l. Drop l in could.
19. p. Drop p in receipt.
20. s. Drop s in aisle, demesne, island.
Change s to z in distinctive words as in abuse verb, house verb, rise verb, etc.
21. sc. Drop c in scent, scythe (sithe).
22. tch. Drop t as in catch, pitch, witch, etc.
23. w. Drop w in whole.
24. ph. Write f for ph, as in philosophy, sphere, etc.

An alphabetical list of words amended according to the above rules is to be found in the Transactions of the American Philological Association for 1886.

Reform by Progressive Steps.

SPELLING REFORM LEAGUE.

I hereby giv my name to be used in the list of advocates of spelling reform, and agree to adopt for general use the simplified spellings indicated by the number following my signature. The numbers signify :
I wil—

1. Use the simplified forms allowed by standard dictionaries, as *program*, *favor*, etc.

2. Use the two words : **tho**, **thru**.

3. Use the ten words : **tho**, **thru**, **wisht**, **catalog**, **definit**, **hav**, **giv**, **liv**, **gard**, **ar**.

4. Use the two rules: 1. Use *f* for *ph* sounded as *f*, as in *alfabet*, *fantom*, *filosofy*, etc. 2. Use *t* for *d* or *ed* final sounded as *t*, as in *fixt*, *tipt*, *stopt*, *clast*, *crost*, *distrest*, etc.

5. Use the Five Rules; 1 and 2 as in 4. 3. Drop *a* from digraf *ea* sounded as short *e*, as in *hed*, *helth*, *sted*, etc. 4. Drop silent *e* final in a short syllable, as in *hav*, *giv*, *liv*, *forbad*, *reptil*, *hostil*, *engin*, *infinnit*, *opposit*, *activ*, etc. 5. When a word ends with a double letter, omit the last, as in *eb*, *ad*, *staf*, *stif*, *stuf*, *eg*, *shal*, *wil*, *tel*, *wel*, *dul*, *lul*, etc.

6. Use the 24 joint rules of the American and English Philological Associations.

7. Use all changes recommended by the Philological Associations.

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